

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02

USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 /040 W

----- 106351

R 301425Z JAN 76

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1181

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 051

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: BULLETS AND BOMBS KILL TWO, INJURE TEN

1. TWO CATHOLIC MALES SHOT AND KILLED SEPARATE ATTACKS JAN 29 AND BOMBS CAUSED EXTENSIVE DAMAGE BELFAST, LONDONDERRY, LURGAN AND STRABNE. TWO BELFAST BOMBS CAUSING MOST INJURIES WERE NO-WARNING ATTACKS ON CATHOLIC PUBS AND SHOOTINGS WERE OF SOFT TARGETS NORTH BELFAST. BOMBING OF POST OFFICE IN LURGAN ONLY ONE CLAIMED BY ORGANIZATION AND THAT BY PROVISIONAL IRA. BOMBING OF LONDONDERRY TV RELAY STATION THAT TOOK ULSTER RADIO OFF AIR IN AREA RESMBLED PROVISIONAL OPERATION. DEATH TOLL NOW 42 IN WORST JANUARY IN "TROUBE" AND MONTH SECOND IN VIOLENCE ONLY TO JULY 1972.

2. POLITICS CONTINUES AGAINST THIS BACKDROP OF VIOLENCE. THERE CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL DISCUSSION IN PARTIES ABOUT MOVES IN RECONVENED CONVENTION. BUSINESS (AGENDA) COMMITTEE MEETS TODAY AND THERE GENERAL BELIEF THAT IT WILL RECOMMEND CONVENTION SESSION FEB. 3 ADJOURN EARLY TO PERMIT RESUMPTION INTER-PARTY TALKS. THERE NO RPT NO SIGN HOWEVER THAT LOYALIST MAJORITY WILL TO DISCUSS COALITION GOVERNMENT OR THAT SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) HAS MODIFIED ITS ATTITUDES TOWARD INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND SECURITY POLICIES. NORTHERN IRELAND LABOUR PARTY WHICH HAS ONLY ONE CONVENTION MEMBER,
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HAS MOUNTED SPEAKING CAMPAIGN URGING MINORITY PARTIES TO FORM

COALITION TO CONFRONT MAJORITY NOW. ERNEST BAIRD WHO LED GROUP OF NINE CONVENTION MEMBERS OUT OF VANGUARD PARTY AND INTO UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST MOVEMENT IS BECOMING MAJOR FIGURE IN ULSTER POLITICAL SCENE. HE REPLACED VANGUARD LEADER WILLIAM CRAIG AS DEPUTY LEADER UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION AND HIS PUBLIC UTTERANCES MAKE HIM SERIOUS CONTENDER WITH IAN PAISLEY FOR HARD-LINE HONORS. ONE SIDE EFFECT OF THIS IS SEEN AS LEADING MODERATE UNIONISTS, PARTICULARLY JOHN TAYLOR, TO DISTANCE THEMSELVES SOMEWHAT FROM UUUC POLICY. DESPITE DISCERNIBLE STIRRINGS THAT COULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TOWARD A NEW CENTRIST GROUP THE OUTLOOK FOR CONVENTION PHASE TWO IS NOT PROMISING. THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS OVER PAST YEAR BUT THIS VERY BRIEF PERIOD IN TERMS SHIFTING OF ULSTER ATTITUDES. PROBABLY MOST THAT CAN COME OF CONVENTION IS INDICATION FOR GOVERNMENT WHETHER IT WORTHWHILE TO GAMBLE WITH A REFERENDUM ON COALITION GOVERNMENT. ON EVE OF RENEWAL CONVENTION, AS ALWAYS, THERE SHADOW OF PROVISIONAL IRA IN BACKGROUND. WITH DEATH OF HUNGER-STRIKER FRANK STAGG IMMINENT THIS PRESENCE AND ITS PROVEN AND POTENTIAL EFFECT ON POLITICS LOOM LARGE. SPICER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, TERRORISM, BOMB DAMAGE, DEATHS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BELFAS00051
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760037-0150
From: BELFAST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976017/aaaaaexf.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hattaycs
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUL 2004 by schwenja>; APPROVED <23 JUL 2004 by hattaycs>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BULLETS AND BOMBS KILL TWO, INJURE TEN
TAGS: PINT, UK, IRA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006